

## ABSTRACT

A client-side apparatus and method for handling media capable of being provided by a plurality of provider computer systems to a client computer. A client-side sniffer module  
5 determines capabilities of the client computer related to handling the media. A first provider computer system is selected based upon the determined capabilities of the client computer, and a network connection is established so that the selected first provider computer system may provide the media to the client computer. A client-side metrics calculator module examines a connection characteristic of the network connection. A client-side stream switcher module  
10 ceases delivery of the media from the first computer provider based upon the examined connection characteristic satisfying a preselected criterion, and selects a second computer provider to deliver the remaining portion of the media to the client computer.